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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADANA 0108

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
APRIL 15, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 15, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. Milli Gazete/Bolge: Incirlik AFB became active once more yesterday noon as five C-130s took off and another one landed at the base. It is reported that the cargo planes carried military equipment brought to the AFB from other US bases in the southeast and Iskenderun port. Bolge reports the "Maersk Rostock" freighter discharged 10 containers of US humanitarian relief to be forwarded to Iraq via southeastern Turkey.

3. Cumhuriyet: Goc-Der, The Immigrants Social Assistance and Cultural Association has launched a campaign to end the village guard system, which is perceived as the most important impediment for return to the villages. Many people moved to urban centers because of the terror that started in the southeast in 1984. While GOT officials have stated that some 375,000 people left from some 3,000 southeastern villages and hamlets, some NGOs have estimated much higher, citing millions of internally displaced people. With the support of NGOs and municipalities, Goc-Der is going to prepare a "Migration Map" of Turkey. The project aims primarily to determine: the exact number of migrants stemming from the 15-year-long clash; how many of them managed to return; what are their living conditions; and what is the status of uncultivated land. At Goc-Der's initiative, petitions with 18,000 signatures demanding return to the villages were submitted to the Turkish parliament. According to the parliament's Human Rights Commission report of April 2003, a total of 58,513 persons from 10,511 families have been returned to 456 villages and 347 hamlets. Clashes between village guards who have been settled in the evicted villages and the returnees have been reported, and thus Goc-Der portrays the village guard system as the main obstacle.

4. Turkiye: Acting on a tip, Van Security Directorate teams seized over 20 kilos of Iranian-origin heroin in the secret compartments of a private car. Two persons arrested in connection with trafficking of the drugs were ordered held by the court. The police searching the houses of the suspects and there seized one unlicensed pistol and EU 10,600.

5. Turkiye: Jandarma teams, acting with a search warrant issued by Adana State Security Court, seized 37 illegal publications, books, magazines, and documents at Ramazan Elcin's house in Gecitli district and Mehmet Sefik Arslan's house in Misis district of Yuregir township. An investigation has started, the officials said.

6. Hurriyet: An independent parliamentary deputy from Hakkari, Mustafa Zeydan, joined ANAP. With his transfer, ANAP will henceforth be represented in the Turkish parliament.

ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

7. Turkiye: It is reported by the Gaziantep-based Southeast Anatolian Exporters Union that there has been a more than five percent increase

in pine nut exports in the first three months of the year. The Exporters Union also announced similar increases in nuts, red lentils, chickpeas, and in wheat flour. More dramatic was the decrease in exports of pistachios, sugar, electric-electronic items, oil seeds, cement, and livestock.

18. Hurriyet: As oil tankers could not come to Yumurtalik because of the war in Iraq, the Turkish Ministry of Energy asked to halt pumping of oil last week because the pipes were already full. Between 5 to 5.5 thousand cubic meters of oil had been pumped daily from the lines, but no oil tankers were able to ship the oil from the storage in Yumurtalik to the international markets.
HOLTZ